

circumstances, is a very proper question. It is to be remembered that the Government are not expropriating the Canadian Northern Railway Company's property. There is no compulsory sale. Parliament has not desired to take the property from its owners. On the contrary, Parliament was quite willing that the company should keep the property and fulfil the obligations attaching to it. But Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann and their associates came to Parliament acknowledging that they had failed, that the enterprise was practically bankrupt, and asked that it be taken off their hands. Most if not all the company's obligations to the public will be assumed by the country. If there was to be any question of allowance to the members of the company themselves, as holders of a common stock which a Government commission had already reported to be worthless, surely one of the first things to be considered was, have the principals in the company made or lost money in the enterprise? If, through the operations of contracting with themselves, or through the handling of the vast sums which in cash or guarantees the Government gave them, they made profits which compensated for their services, surely they could not ask for more when they were throwing up the whole business and admitting their failure. On the other hand, if no profit in any form has been reaped by the promoters, there might fairly be a question whether, not as a matter of right, but as one of grace, some allowance should not be made to them sufficient to generously compensate for their services. Enquiry into the question of profit or loss would, in that view, be of the highest importance. But it seems that the legislation was prepared to prevent any such enquiry. Regardless of what the past profit may have been, and officially warned that they must ask no question about that, the arbitrators are confined to the duty of fixing a value on a quantity of common stock that has already been declared valueless by another Government commission.

One of the Women's Problems

EVERYWHERE in the British Empire women have worked magnificently in the various lines of service in which, either directly by the production of things necessary, or indirectly by taking the places of men needed at the front, they could contribute towards the prosecution of the war. Their patriotic and sacrificing work has been recognized everywhere, and has been the means of winning for their sex privileges long desired by many, which previously had been widely resisted. The recognition of women's right to the suffrage, which was refused and strenuously opposed while the chief advocates of the change were smashing windows in London, has come easily in the new atmosphere created by women's part in the war-work. With very little opposition a measure has just been enacted in England which will, at the coming elections, place millions of women's names on the voters' lists. Elsewhere, too, the same influence has produced similar results. Many thousands of women — the relatives of soldiers — voted in the recent election in this country. It is taken for granted that at the coming session of the Canadian Parliament a measure will be enacted conferring the franchise upon women on the same terms as upon men. In nearly all the Provinces women suffrage, if not actually

in operation, is regarded as one of the things that will very soon become law.

Out of all this remarkable advance will spring new problems that will demand attention. One of these, that is only occasionally thought of but which will soon become urgent, is the effect of the wide employment of women upon the industrial conditions of the future. In former times much discussion occurred respecting women's qualifications for many of the services usually performed by men. There is little room now for such debate. Women have entered into a great many lines of service for which a few years ago they would have been deemed unfit, and they have proved their ability to render valuable service. Indeed, it is the very success of the women in such work that is likely to create a most difficult problem. Women have done and are doing so well that the question naturally arises, Why should they not continue to do the work? The soldiers will return and will expect to find employment at their former places, or at all events in their old lines of work. But the places are filled by women and the women will not be disposed to retire. They have cultivated the habit of earning money and they value the independence that this has brought them. They will strive to retain their places, and the employers in most cases will be disposed to keep them. There may thus grow up a conflict between men and women which will seriously affect the whole industrial situation. The men have their trade unions. The women will organize in like manner. This aspect of the after-the-war situation cannot fail to be very interesting.

Buildings Too High

THE sky-scraper is not a thing of beauty. Blessed are the cities which by timely regulation have limited the height of buildings to reasonable figures. There is one class of building which should not have more than one story above the ground floor. In the case of a recent fire many children were quartered on the top floor of a high building and many lives were lost. Toronto Saturday Night forcibly says:

"It should be the law of the land that buildings erected for the purpose of housing children or invalids do not exceed two stories in height and be built of materials as nearly fireproof as can be devised. All stairways to be wide and well lighted at all times. There must be no dark angles of any nature whatever, and real fire escapes to be provided, not the imitation affairs that are now so common. Probably a thousand children have been burned up in this country in our schools and asylums within the last quarter of a century and we have done practically nothing to enforce proper conditions. One can scarcely imagine a worse condition of mind than that of a helpless nervous invalid in one of our hospitals when the fire-bells clang in the neighborhood. Many a bed-ridden patient has died from fear of being burned to death."

Fire-proof materials and fire escapes are important. But even more important is it to guard against too great height in the construction of such buildings as our contemporary refers to. In our cities, where land is so cheap, there is a tendency to get accommoda-

tion in the air. Many of our public buildings would be the better for having only two floors instead of three or more. No sick persons or children should, in event of fire, have to descend more than a single flight of stairs.

An Underpaid Service

APPEALS of public officials for increased pay do not always arouse public sympathy. The service of the Government is, to many, an attractive one. Excepting in the higher ranks, where it is not easy to hold the best men, there is not usually any difficulty in finding men for the various public departments, and where men struggle to get the places they are expected to be content with the established order of things. The chap who, as others think, is lucky enough to get "a Government job" is envied by many of his friends and neighbors. Nevertheless the service is in many cases a poorly paid one. There are some classes of workers who are quite inadequately rewarded, towards whom a more liberal policy would be justified. In the lower ranges of service the men who work for the public are not as well off to-day as those who are in private employ. In the case of most of the latter considerable increases have been granted to meet the very large increase in the cost of living. In the Government services the increases are few and small. The letter carriers of the Dominion are now seeking an increase of pay and their case seems to be a good one. It is stated that those in Eastern Canada have received no increase since 1912. The service in which they are engaged is one of importance, requiring integrity, intelligence and untiring industry. In all seasons, in all kinds of weather, these men must do their work promptly. Often they have to carry loads that are burdensome. The Postmaster General will do well to look carefully into the appeal that is being made to him. If a permanent increase is not deemed expedient at present the letter carriers may fairly ask for a war-time bonus, to continue until some readjustment of the cost of living takes place.

One of Our Immigrants

THE appointment of Hon. John Oliver to succeed the late Hon. H. C. Brewster as Premier of British Columbia is one of the incidents of Canadian life which, by no means uncommon, are calculated to teach the outside world the strength of Canadian democracy and the opportunity which is open in this country to every man, no matter what his rank or means, who brings into his work the qualities of integrity and industry. Mr. Oliver as a boy worked as a miner in England. Coming to Canada with his parents, he worked again in mines, and later in lumbering and agriculture, acquiring a homestead in British Columbia. Elected to the British Columbia Legislature eighteen years ago, Mr. Oliver sat for a long time on the Opposition side, and on the recent formation of the Liberal Cabinet became a Minister under Mr. Brewster, whom he now succeeds as Prime Minister. The record of men like John Oliver makes the best immigration literature that Canada can have.